

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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P R 252059Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9883

INFO DIA WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION OF NEW CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1582, 1624

1. IT WAS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED ON MORNING OF APRIL 25 THAT COLONEL POLICARPO PAZ GARCIA HAD BEEN NAMED THE CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES. HE HAD BEEN COMMANDER OF THE FUERZA DE SEGURIDAD NATIONAL (FSP), THE NATIONAL POLICE FORCE.

2. PAZ WAS BORN ON DECEMBER 7, 1932 IN COASCORAN, HONDURAS. HE IS MARRIED TO CARLOTA AMALIA MARQUEZ, AND THEY HAVE FIVE CHILDREN. HE ENTERED THE ARMY AS A PRIVATE IN 1949 AND WAS APPOINTED A SECOND LIEUTENANT IN 1954.

FROM 1954 UNTIL 1972 PAZ WAS ASSIGNED TO THE FIRST INFANTRY BATTALION AND HELD THE POSITIONS OF PLATOON COMMANDER, COMPANY COMMANDER, S-4, EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND

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COMMANDER (1969-1972). IN 1965, HE WAS THE COMMANDER

OF THE HONDURAN CONTINGENT IN THE INTER-AMERICAN PEACE FORCE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. HE IS CONSIDERED BY SOME TO BE A NATIONAL HERO FOR STOPPING THE SALVADORAN ADVANCE IN THE EL AMATILLO AREA DURING THE 1969 WAR. HE WAS MADE A COLONEL IN 1971, AND BECAME COMMANDER OF THE NATIONAL POLICE IN DECEMBER 1972.

3. COMMENT: AS REPORTED IN PREVIOUS TELEGRAMS, EMBASSY SOURCES PREDICTED PAZ WOULD BE THE NEW CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES. THE LT. COLONELS WERE DETERMINED TO HAVE THE POSITIONS OF CHIEF OF STATE AND CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES HELD BY SEPARATE MEN. ONE OF THEIR COMPLAINTS WAS THAT LOPEZ HAD NOT BEEN CAPABLE OF ADEQUATELY ATTENDING TO THE DUTIES OF BOTH POSITIONS AT THE SAME TIME. PAZ IS A MAN OF AVERAGE INTELLIGENCE WHO DOES WELL IN ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES BUT IS NOT PARTICULARLY FORCEFUL. HE COULD BEST BE CHARACTERIZED AS ONE OF MELGAR'S PROTEGES WHO HAS ENJOYED MELGAR'S HELP SINCE 1961, WHEN HE WAS A CAPTAIN AND MELGAR A MAJOR.
SANCHEZ

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